

INQUIRY SUMMARY (Anticipated Requests for CALFED Category III Funding Nov. 1997)

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. PROJECT TITLE: DEER CREEK WATERSHED MANAGEMENT / IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

APPLICANT NAME: DEER CREEK WATERSHED CONSERVANCY and California State University Research Foundation

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PRIMARY BIOLOGICAL/ECOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES:

The Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy (DCWC) has established a framework to coordinate enhancement/restoration projects and management practices within the Deer Creek watershed in order to achieve identified habitat characteristics. A Watershed Management Strategy (WMS) will prioritize identified enhancement/restoration actions to be engineered and funded for completion. The tasks listed in "C" below are not yet prioritized or engineered, but it is expected that proposals will be identified for the November 1997 Category III funding cycle.

The Primary Biological/Ecological Objectives are: (1) Enhance and improve stream habitat for all life stages of anadromous fish; (2) Develop on-going monitoring programs to evaluate important ecosystem processes to ensure the continued support of long-term viability of the aquatic resources in Deer Creek; and, (3) Develop and store habitat data to facilitate evaluation of restoration actions, mitigation strategies and emergency actions in order to protect resident species (listed and non-listed) and their habitat.

C. APPROACH/TASKS/SCHEDULE

The list of following projects is being submitted as an inquiry in order to provide CALFED with the general appropriateness of the project concept for future Category III funding proposals.

The Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy's (DCWC) Watershed Management Strategy (WMS) calls for several implementation measures that require project design and "on-the-ground" operations. The following specific projects are herein identified for completion during fiscal years 1998 - 2000:

1. ARUNDO DONAS ERADICATION PROJECT

The lower reach of Deer Creek from the Highway 99 bridge to the outlet at the Sacramento River is infested with Arundo and other alien plant species. This project would identify the extent and location of the plants and would fund the physical and chemical removal of this vegetation by a qualified contractor.

2. STREAMBANK STABILIZATION (Robinson Corner)

The orchard fronting the north bank of Deer Creek west of the Highway 99 bridge was severely undercut during the winter storms of 1997. The cause of this particular bank erosion was found by geomorphological analysis to be due to the position of the Highway 99 bridge rather than due to a natural and predictable meander of the stream. This project would fund physical streambank protection for the Robinson property in conjunction with planning for the Highway 99 bridge improvement project.

3. HIGHWAY 99 BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION

Together with a history of obsolete design and the winter of 1997 floods, much of the soil and gravel has eroded away from the bridge supports. CALTRANS personnel recognize that the condition does not pose an immediate safety problem, but that future storm waters could be diverted into nearby stream banks and might cause future widening of the creekbed. This project would allow local landowners to work with CALTRANS in designing water conveyance patterns under the bridge so as to minimize soil erosion and water quality degradation.

4. **FOREST ROAD UPGRADE AND IMPROVEMENTS**

In 1996-97, a comprehensive road survey of the upper Deer Creek watershed was conducted. It concluded that a significant percentage of erosion and downstream siltation was due to existing logging roads. This project would select the most serious erosion problem locations and improve them through redesign and culvert replacement, regrading and other constructive actions.

5. **STREAMBANK REVEGETATION**

There has been a loss of streambank riparian vegetation due to past gravel extraction on upper Deer Creek along Hwy. 32. This project would complement an existing stream corridor fencing project implemented by Collins Pine Company and local rancher, Tucker Baccala by revegetating the livestock exclusionary area along this reach of the stream.

6. **WATER EXCHANGE AGREEMENT ANNUITY**

This project would fund an endowment providing the operation and maintenance necessary for contract renewal of the proposed water exchange program on the lower reach of Deer Creek.

Note: Depending on funding, these projects are scheduled for completion during FY 1998 - 2000.

D. **JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT AND FUNDING BY CALFED**

Deer Creek is one of only four remaining streams in the Central Valley of California to provide spawning and rearing habitat for the last wild runs of spring-run chinook salmon which was at one time the most abundant run of salmon in California. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), California Dept. of Fish & Game (CDFG) and CALFED have all identified Deer Creek as a priority watershed in their following respective plans: the Anadromous Fish Restoration Program, the Status of Actions to Restore Central Valley Spring-Run Chinook Salmon, and the CALFED Draft Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan.

E. **BUDGET COSTS AND THIRD PARTY IMPACTS: Unknown**

F. **APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS**

DCWC has taken the lead role in developing a framework to assess the watershed conditions, implement and monitor proven management practices, test new management practices and implement enhancement and restoration actions that support long-term environmental integrity and economic stability for the Deer Creek watershed. DCWC and California State University Research Foundation are qualified California Public Non-Profit Corporations 501(c)(3) eligible to accept public and private grant awards.

G. **MONITORING AND DATA EVALUATION**

All project will be monitored by a scientific/technical advisory committee (TAC) convened by DCWC.. Additionally, California Dept. of Water Resources (DWR) is conducting a Water Quality Monitoring Program for Deer Creek.

H. **LOCAL SUPPORT/COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS/COMPATIBILITY WITH CALFED OBJECTIVES**

The membership of DCWC consists of all the major landowners and irrigators along Deer Creek. Together with the landowners, county, state and federal agencies responsible for resource management within the watershed have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the purpose of "establishing a voluntary and cooperative commitment to work together in a watershed planning process to the extent of their authority." The objectives of this program meet all the objectives of CALFED.